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6. SIEGE OF LISLE, 1708.—This strong town was defended to desperation by the French, against the allied forces under Prince Eugene. He says, "I directed two assaults to be made to facilitate the assault of a covered way, but was always repulsed with a horrible carnage. Five thousand English sent me by Marlborough, to retrieve my loss, performed wonders, but were thrown into disorder. We heard the cry, '*Vive le Roi, et Boufflers.*' I said a few words in English—those brave fellows rallied round me, and I led them to the fire. Here was another unsuccessful attack: out of 5,000 English, not 1,500 returned, and 1,200 workmen were killed."*

7. SIEGE OF PARIS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.—Henry the Fourth and his army besieged Paris; a sore famine raged within the city, and in the space of one month 30,000 persons died of hunger—mothers fed on the flesh of their own children. The Spanish ambassador advised them to dig up the dead bodies, and make use of their bones, pounded to compose a kind of paste. This detestable food cost the greatest part of those who ate it their lives.†

MORAL CHARACTER OF THE NAVY.

Our navy has been so much the pride and boast of the nation as to make it somewhat hazardous for any one to whisper a word in its dispraise. We have never doubted its deep and general corruption; but we chose to abstain from speaking of it, till we could bring proof the most satisfactory to confirm our statements, and should have space for a pretty full disclosure. Our limits will not permit us even now to give a minute exhibition of the subject; but from two witnesses, one a clergyman who sailed to Russia in one of our war-ships, and the other for many years a midshipman in the navy, we select such illustrations of its character as will perhaps suffice for most of our readers.

The Rev. J. C. WEBSTER, from whose report to the Seamen's Friend's Society we take the following extracts, was sent out by that Society to St. Petersburg in 1837. We have the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with the writer; and we have reason to believe that the subjoined extracts give too favorable an impression respecting the real character of our navy. Indeed, the cautious Secretary of the Society was afraid to publish the strongest statements of Mr. Webster's report; and it would probably be easy for any man at all familiar with our army or navy, to state facts that would startle, disgust and confound the public.

GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE.—It is generally understood that the word of a commanding officer of a man-of-war is law. He can punish at will. A very good regulation, not long since adopted in the navy, is, that punishment can be inflicted *only* under the direc-

* Memoirs of Prince Eugene.

† Villroy's Memoirs.

tion of the presiding officer; but his authority is well nigh absolute—for the process of redress for a common sailor, under any ordinary circumstances, by an appeal to a court-martial, would be so tardy and dubious, as hardly to be considered a qualification of the statement that the system is one of unlimited despotism. From the time Jack signs his shipping papers, during a three or four years' cruise, till he is discharged, he virtually surrenders his own free agency. He is kept like a criminal within the walls of a prison during most of the time; and I have known it to be with the utmost difficulty that a boy could get liberty to go on shore in a foreign land, and see a mother or sister whom he had not seen for years. No confidence is placed in Jack, and so none is begotten in him towards his officers.

The summary and barbarous practice of flogging upon the bare back is the means used to secure obedience to the laws. The principal offences for which this penalty is incurred are, want of cleanliness, intoxication, stealing, neglecting the watch, desertion, and disobedience of a superior officer. And sometimes Jack suffers deservedly, and sometimes he does not; for it requires but little ingenuity in a superior officer to get a man flogged for the satisfaction of a mere personal grudge. When I went upon deck, before breakfast, I seldom failed to see some poor fellow smarting under the boatswain's lash at the gangway. The instrument used is a handle twelve inches long, with nine thongs attached to one end. When we lay at Portsmouth England, several men sought an opportunity to desert the ship; most of them were retaken and put in irons until we had gone to sea again. On the morning of the twelfth of July, I heard the order throughout the ship of "all hands to witness punishment." I had no disposition to witness the barbarous process; but even in the cock-pit I was not out of the reach of the sound of the lash, and the cries of the wretched sufferers. Seven men received three dozen lashes each, and one, who proved to be a ringleader of the rest, four dozen. The quiet and unflinching manner with which this last endured his punishment, excited a degree of surprise, and perhaps admiration, among all the crew. He uttered not a groan; and when the boatswain's mate ceased flogging, after he had given him three dozen, supposing he had finished, Jack himself remarked, "only three dozen yet, sir, one more if you please, only lay them on fair, and be as quick as you can!"

Now, that this treatment was often deserved, I did not doubt. Indeed, as some cases occurred, I could not well see how it could be otherwise; and if its whole tendency was to crush the spirit of a man, and banish all self-respect, if any remained, and well nigh preclude the possibility of his reformation, I attributed the fault, not so much to the commanding officer, as to the nature of the system. It is one of the evils inseparable from a system of war. The system collects the worst class of men together. In the first place, what respectable man goes as a sailor on board a man-of-war? Many are adepts in crime before they go on board, and they are only rendered worse by their intimate associations. They are treated as criminals, not in any manner to inspire reciprocal confidence, and improper deportment is the very natural result. Discipline must be had—order must be preserved—an offence is committed. There is no

patience or disposition to adopt the rational and scriptural mode of moral and religious instruction, persuasion, and kind treatment—this would be too tardy—a ship or fleet might be captured in the mean time. Besides, it would conflict directly, both in theory and practice, with the principles of the system. Therefore the summary method of flogging is resorted to. A man's back is more accessible than his conscience, and more readily affected by his fellow-men, and so the appeal to that is direct.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CHARACTER.—When it was convenient, divine service was had once upon the Sabbath. A little wildness about the weather, however, served as quite a sufficient apology for dispensing with the sermon, which on any occasion must not exceed fifteen or twenty minutes in length. When preaching could not be had, the prayers of the Episcopal service were usually read. In compliance, however, with the request of the commodore, and in concurrence with the wishes of the chaplain, I preached repeatedly during the passage. But after all, the Sabbath is but little known on board a man-of-war.

I did not neglect to do what I could for the promotion of temperance, by conversation upon the subject, and distribution of temperance papers. It is to be regretted that the vile poison is yet dealt out to our sailors in the navy, and that vitiated appetite, by the means, is cherished, which we should have the best reason to hope would be corrected, were the poison withheld during a three or four years' cruise. It was painful to see the evidence of immoderate drinking even among some officers.

Profanity, may, perhaps, be said to be habitual with most of all classes on board a man-of-war. Gentlemen indulge the habit, who would be very unwilling to have it understood among their friends, or in the circle in which they move on shore. The plea, however, is, "that it is absolutely necessary." Admit it, and what must we think of the system which makes a violation of God's law absolutely necessary?

Beginning with those high in station, and descending to the lowest grade of such a ship, we find a soil most adverse to the growth of true religion. It is to be feared that some officers of our navy affect to look with a supercilious contempt on humble, unaffected piety. As a general thing, they are at the farthest remove from the spirit of our blessed Saviour, whose great principle of action was to overcome evil by suffering, and to endure insult rather than revenge.

With regard to the mass of the crew, we can judge somewhat of its character when we reflect upon the materials that compose it. First, there are the fugitives from our penitentiaries and public justice, incendiaries, thieves, and murderers. Then, there is a class of the lowest of the low, who have been before the mast on board merchantmen, till the grog has been dispensed with, and now have enlisted in the navy, at reduced wages, for the sake of the scanty pittance of two or three gills per day of filthy whisky. Repeatedly did they assure me that it was for no other reason that they had enlisted in the navy. It is due, however, to a few, to say, that they have enlisted there for the sake of being obliged to allowance themselves, with the hope that it may work a reformation in them. Again, there is a class of youth, some with and some without parents or guardians, who were so refractory and disobedient, that they have been put on board our ships of war in order to keep the peace at

home, and, if possible, to subdue their fractious wills. There are still others, who through dissipation, have become unfortunate in business, and have changed their names, and sought this seclusion from the society of friends and acquaintance, with whom they once had a fair and honorable standing. I have been told by such that they have very reputable connections in life, who know not where they are, but have supposed for years that they are dead—a reflection, I am sure, more desirable in many cases, than a knowledge of their true condition.

I have been induced to make this statement of facts, that well-disposed persons, who may think the navy a desirable situation for themselves or friends, may know what the navy is. As for myself, did I wish to be almost sure of sending a friend to perdition, I would put him at an early age into the navy. He will be surrounded by a mass of any thing but the savor of true religion. Most of our ships have no provision for moral and religious instruction; and, what is still worse to be lamented, as I believe, is the utter impossibility for a minister to be faithful to souls on board a man-of-war. The whole system is at open war with the very first principles of the gospel. The system is radically wrong, and most of its associations injurious in the extreme. Send a youth on board such a ship, and licentiousness, and irreligion, and vain show meet him at the gang-way, and faithfully attend him, till, in nine cases out of ten, he becomes their relentless victim.

A GLIMPSE AT OUR NAVY.

Evils and Abuses in the Naval and Merchant Service exposed. By WILLIAM McNALLY, formerly of the United States Navy. 1839.

The spirit of this book is bad enough, very like that of the business in which its author had been engaged; but, as he had ample means of information, and no conceivable motive for traducing his own profession, we shall call him upon the stand as a proper and credible witness respecting the practices and general character of our navy.

MODE OF PROCURING SEAMEN.—“Seamen enlist for three years. There are always a number of crimps hanging round the rendezvous where the seamen ship, to induce them to do so, for which they receive a fee, not from the government, but from the seamen themselves. A bonus must be paid by them for permission to enter the service of their country.

“*Crimping* is a word well understood by all persons acquainted with the navy; but to the uninitiated it will be necessary to explain it. A crimp is not a whit more respectable than a body-snatcher, and twin brother to one who bears nearly the same name, and is supported on the establishment of a certain class of females. The crimp persuades the seaman by fine stories to ship, tells him he will have three months’ advance, gets him to affix his name to the articles, and if he is what is called a *green hand*, induces him to go on board the ship in which he has agreed to serve, for the purpose of looking at her. While there, the crimp produces the certificate of the man having entered at the rendezvous, which is given by the officer who ships the man to the crimp. When this order is once presented to the officer of the receiving ship, the sailor cannot again be permitted